

"How Big Is Your God?"

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Text: Genesis 1: 31a

"God saw all he had made and indeed it was very good." (Jerusalem Bible)

This past summer when we were on vacation we stopped to see the Dinosaur National Monument in Colorado. There before our very eyes were all sizes and shapes of bones from Dinosaurs, Brontosaurus and other prehistoric creatures. We read all of the displays and other literature they had, but the one thing that really startled me, was the fact that the scientists working on this project have dated the time of life of these animals at 140 million years ago. Then if we take the approximate date of the age of earth at 10 billion years, we can see that a conflict arises concerning what many believe about creation.

In the creation story we read of the idea of the author as to how creation came about. Many people literally believe that the creation took only seven days for God to create everything. Now there is nothing wrong with this, yet to many it is all wrong. A man by the name of Robinson, a British clergyman, wrote a book several years ago entitled, "Your God Is Too Small," in which among other things he accuses most people of thinking of God in small and insignificant terms. He tells us that we limit him as to size, as to vastness, and as to creation.

I think regarding the creation story we must look at it from a different angle than we have in the past. Today science has at its disposal many new means for detecting the age of different things. Now I do not understand all of them, nor do I pretend to, but one test they use can determine fairly accurately the age of something. This is called the carbon test. It will tell for instance the approximate date on which a given manuscript has been written. It has been used to tell the difference between an authentic piece of art and a hoax. I have read how from time to time it has been used on an old painting discovered in an old barn or house, and supposedly it was painted by a Rembrandt or Van Gogh, well the test has proven either that it was a real work of art or a hoax.

~~to be painted by one of the old masters, like van Gough or Rembrandt. Now with this carbon test a sample of the paint can be examined and the age of the painting can become known, and it is proof of whether this is a true masterpiece or a fake.~~ This test has been used for instance on the dead sea scrolls and the scrolls have tested out to the year when they are thought to have been written. Now science has spent years and years in the study of different parts of the earth. From their studies they have concluded that the earth is ^Billions of years old. But if we consider the history of the world as we know it and check this figure against the one the scientists come up with we find there is a discrepancy. Now we wonder just what we should believe. Is the Bible wrong and the scientists right? Or is the reverse true? We can believe both of them and still believe in the creation. I do not go along with the theory that we must accept only what can be proven, since there are some things we must accept by faith alone. However if we look at the creation story we see that it took six days to create the universe and on the seventh day God rested from His work. We can accept this with no question. But the question that needs to be asked is how long is a day for God? Is it twenty four hours such as we have? I think that if we limit God's day to this small amount we limit God. We confine Him and put Him in terms of our finite thinking. We forget that God is infinite. That He cannot be thought of in human terms. He must be thought of in as vast an area as it is possible for us to think. ^{IN 2 PETER WE READ} ~~that, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."~~ this description may also be limiting God. Perhaps one day to Him is ten thousand years or even a million. But this is only speculation and guessing. We cannot prove how long it took for creation nor is it that important to do so. What is more important is how we look at God. Is He confined to the days and hours such as a mortal, or is He vast and limitless? Infinite in other words.

Mr. Robinson also points out that God is looked upon in many other ways. One of these is as a giver. Many people have the mental image of Him as a grandfatherly type doling out His favors to those who are good and withholding them from those who are naughty as we do with small children.

A young boy of about 10 had it all figured out, that if no one

saw him take what did not belong to him it was o.k. And if he played on forbidden ground and no one saw him that was alright too. Whippings and scoldings and punishment of all kinds were to no avail. Each time he would say, "But no one saw me." One day his mother said to him, "God sees you. God sees everywhere you go and everything you do." This made the little boy very indignant. He said with scorn, "Is that all He's got to do, lay on His stomach all day and watch me?" Perhaps we do not quite think of God in this extreme. But perhaps our thinking is a bit colored and we tend to think of Him only in terms of being a cross between a kindly old grandfather and a penitentiary guard. If this is the case, we need to broaden our thinking to the point where we can think of Him as being much, much more than this. He is the giver of life and health. Of food and clothing Of the air we breath and the water we drink. Of wind and snow and rain. In other words He is everywhere and can be seen in everything. And if He is ~~this~~ all of this, then He cannot be confined to the petty little job of rewarding us for our good and evil deeds. Too often we try to have a mental picture of what He looks like. We are like the little girl who was very busy with a box of crayons in the juvenile section of a big bookstore. One of the clerks asked her what she was doing, and the girl replied, "I'm drawing a picture of God." But how do you know what God looks like asked the startled clerk. "That", said the little girl, is why I'm drawing Him. I want to find out." We shouldn't need a picture of Him to know what He is. Nor do we need a picture of Him to love Him. All we need is to try to understand that He is not confined just for our use. Many of our children use a table prayer that states, "God is great, God is Good." From this simple declaration it should become apparant to even small children that God is not small, nor restricted in any way. What is the saying we use in some of our church services? Something about God being in all and through all. This too should make us aware of how vast and large He is.

~~But with all of His vastness, and for all of His largeness, the thing that remains constant is the fact that He can still be a personal God. Now this does not mean that I can take Him and confine Him for just my use. But it does mean that He can care for you and you and you as well as me. He can care for everyone. The thing about our God that is unique and that sets Him apart~~

If we only think in terms of God creating at the beginning of time or of the world then we are also limiting God and making him small. He has gone on creating and making new from that time until this. Right at this very moment ~~he~~ he is creating and renewing all of his creation throughout the universe.

A week ago in Allentown I saw creation in a form I have never seen before. We visited The Good Shepherd Hospital while there. This hospital was started by a Lutheran clergyman in the early 1900's. It specializes in trying to rehabilitate so called hopeless cases. It takes crippled people of all ages and races and religions and they are worked with and made as fit for the outside world as an institution of this kind can do. But one case in particular proves how we as humans limit God and his creation.

A 17 year old girl there was seated in a wheel chair with a metal band around her head and a thin pointer attached to the band. What made everything seem so peculiar was the fact that she had difficulty sitting up straight in her wheelchair. A young nurse sat beside her with a board upon which were what looked like letters and words. The man who was acting as tour guide when we had reached the next unoccupied room told us the story of this girl. She was the daughter of a physician and she has cerebral palsy. Her case had been considered as entirely hopeless. Everyone who checked her or tried to do something with her were firmly convinced that she was completely useless as a person and nothing could be done to help her. So she was written off and left to sit in her wheelchair. That is until a nurse who knew something about speech tried to check her. She worked out this band on her head with a pointer, and then she made up this board with letters and numbers. Then she proceeded to try to teach her the alphabet. She succeeded in this, asking a letter and the girl pointing to it. Then she taught her ~~in~~ words. Then sentences, very simple but for this girl a miracle. It was not too long after that this girl started dictating poetry to this nurse by pointing to letters or words and since then it has been discovered that the only useful thing this girl has ~~x~~ is a very remarkable brain. They have since taught her how to operate her own wheelchair and she has the complete freedom of the three acres this hospital covers. She has never gotten lost nor caused any problems with her roaming of the corridors. All of this from someone written off as useless.

But you see, this is also a part of Gods creation. A very wonderful part of his creation and yet we as human write these things off as being of no importance. We want to look at the stars and marvel, or we want to see the vastness of the mountains or the seas and marvel at Gods creation. But the things

that are simple and common we write off as practically having no part or very little part in Gods creation. We see him or only think of him as creating once and then sitting back and doing no more than ~~watchxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ watching over us and his creation.

The thing about God that is unique and that sets him apart from any other God is that he loves us. He actually cares what happens to each of us. This makes Him a personal God and is actually the essence of Christianity.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son for you and me." No other religion can make this claim. What a difference this should make in our lives. To know that the Father of all creation loves me and cares what happens to me. Is your God still too small? If he is, it is time that we all changed out thinking about him. He is much bigger than any of us could imagine, and yet, he is a great God. Like the song says, He is a great big wonderful God. And best of all he loves us.